

CLAIMS

1 - 23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended): A method for simultaneously slicing at least two food product blocks comprising:

- feeding in parallel the at least two food product blocks to a blade;
- inserting each of the at least two food product blocks into a feed passage, wherein the at least two food product blocks are optionally brought into contact with a limit stop;
- conveying the at least two food product blocks towards the blade by at least one conveying means;
- slicing the ends of the food product blocks; and
- connecting a means to ~~[[the]]~~ a end, remote from the blade, of each of the at least two food product blocks, wherein the contact between the means and the at least two food product blocks occurs only during slicing of one or more of the at least two food product blocks.

25. (Withdrawn): A method for simultaneously slicing at least two food product blocks (2) fed in parallel to a blade (11), in which the food product blocks (2) are each inserted into a feed passage (14) optionally brought into contact with a limit stop (16), conveyed towards the blade (11) and sliced, the ends (17) of the food product blocks (2) remote from the blade are each brought into contact with a means (1, 18) and the means (1, 18) is driven by at least one conveying means (4), which also conveys the food product blocks (2), characterized in that there is only a frictional connection between the means (1, 18) and the conveying means (4), such that the food product blocks (2) are not compressed or are compressed only insignificantly by the means (1, 18).

26. (Currently Amended): A method for slicing a food product block comprising:

- feeding the food product block to a blade;
- conveying the food product block towards the blade by at least one conveying means, wherein at any desired time during slicing of the food product block, the rear end of the food product block is brought into contact in each case with a means, and
- wherein the means is driven by the food product block, the conveying means, or both during said contact with the food product block ~~by the food product block, the conveying means,~~

~~or both.~~

27. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 24, wherein the front ends of the at least two food product blocks are arranged in such a way that, before the first cut, they are located in a line in a plane substantially parallel to the cutting plane of the blade, such that no trimming cut has to be performed.

28. (Cancelled):

29. (Currently Amended): A method according to claim 24, wherein the means is connected to the food product block reversibly and force-lockingly, interlockingly, and/or by material bonding, ~~or any combination thereof.~~

30. (Withdrawn): A method according to claim 25, characterized in that connection of the means (1, 18) takes place before or preferably after slicing starts.

31. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 24, wherein the means is removed from the feed passage after slicing.

32. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 24, wherein the connection between the means and the food product block is broken once slicing of at least one food product block is completed.

33. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 24, wherein the means is driven, at least at times, solely by the conveying means, one of the two or more food product blocks, or both.

34. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 24, wherein, at least towards the end of the respective slicing process, the means is/are in each case engaged with at least one conveying means.

35. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 24, wherein a plurality of food

product blocks are sliced in parallel.

36 – 46. (Cancelled):

47. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 29, wherein the means is driven, at least at times, solely by the at least one conveying means of the food product block, the food product block, or both.

48. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 47, wherein at least towards the end of the respective slicing process, the means is/are in each case engaged with the at least one conveying means.

49. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 26, wherein the means is connected to the food product block reversibly and force-lockingly, interlockingly, by material bonding, or any combination thereof.

50. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 49, wherein the means is driven, at least at times, solely by the conveying means of the food product block, the food product block, or both .

51. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 50, wherein at least towards the end of the respective slicing process, the means is/are in each case engaged with at least one conveying means.

52. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 48, wherein the at least one conveying means includes two conveyor belts that are aligned substantially parallel to one another, and have opposite facing surfaces that come into contact with the at least two food product blocks, and

wherein the two conveyor belts have an inlet side distal from the blade.

53. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 51, wherein the at least one conveying means includes two conveyor belts that are aligned substantially parallel to one

another, and have opposite facing surfaces that come into contact with the at least two food product blocks, and

wherein the two conveyor belts have an inlet side distal from the blade.

54. (Previously Presented): A method according to claim 52, further including the steps of clamping the at least two food product blocks between the two conveyor belts, and moving the at least two food product blocks through the cutting plane by using the two conveyor belts.

55. (Previously Presented): A method for simultaneously slicing at least two food product blocks comprising:

inserting the at least two food product blocks into a guide passage;

guiding the at least two product blocks into a conveying means;

conveying the at least two food product blocks towards the blade using at least one conveyor belt;

slicing the food product blocks;

attaching a gripper to an end, remote from the blade, of each of the at least two food product blocks;

driving the grippers that are attached to each of the at least two food product blocks, at least part of the time, using only the at least one conveyor belt, one of the at least two food product blocks, or both;

engaging the at least two food product blocks with the at least one conveyor belt;

wherein the at least one conveyor belt includes an inlet side and an blade side;

wherein the at least two food product blocks are in contact with the at least one conveyor belt so that the at least two food product blocks, the gripper, or both are conveyed towards the blade; and

wherein the grippers attach the ends of the at least two food product blocks after slicing of the at least two product blocks has begun;

wherein the at least two food product blocks are arranged in such a way that before the first cut, the at least two food product blocks are located in a line, in a plane substantially parallel to the cutting plane of the blade so that no trimming cut has to be performed.